

RECPT # Record

CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS

86-1705

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Proposed Response to HPSCI on the Agency Secretarial Plan

FROM:
Robert W. Magee
Director of Personnel

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

31 March 1986

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

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OFFICER'S
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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. OCA

2. 7624 H55

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Bob:

Attached is a copy of the response on the questions of the Agency Secretarial Plan that has been sent to the Comptroller.

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Q. Has a similar system been implemented anywhere else in the Federal Civil Service? If so, please provide specific details regarding the similar program. If not, please describe why CIA should be permitted to establish this precedent.

A. To our knowledge, there is not a system similar to the Agency secretarial program elsewhere in the Federal Government. Our plan incorporates elements of other programs in place in the Federal Government, but taken as a whole represents a new approach to management of the secretarial occupation within an organization.

The pay system which is an integral part of the Agency secretarial program is a spinoff from the familiar grade-banding system. As you are aware, this system is in place at the Navy research laboratories at China Lake and San Diego under authority of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978; and the Agency is experimenting with a similar program in our Office of Communications. As in the grade-banding concept, the number of secretarial levels have been reduced to four levels as follows: Secretarial Trainee, Secretary, Senior Secretary and Executive Secretary. Again, as in grade banding, the pay levels have been expanded to allow salary growth within a pay level without having to rely on promotion. The way in which the bands have been established differs somewhat from grade banding, in that each band has been established with a pay range of 50 percent (rather than 60 percent plus for some of the banded levels); and there are 20 equal increments within each level of approximately 2 percent. These ranges were established based on the advice of the consulting firm of Towers, Perrin, Forster and Crosby which has assisted us in the development of our overall program.

Beyond these similarities, however, the Agency secretarial program differs significantly from any other we are aware of because it represents a major change in philosophy toward the secretarial occupation. The heart of our program is a concentrated four-year drive to build additional responsibilities into many of our secretarial jobs through a formal job enrichment program, and at the same time to provide intensive training and education to our secretarial personnel to develop the skills and knowledges they will require to perform the new responsibilities of their jobs.

We believe that the approach we are using toward this occupation will serve us in two significant ways. First, it represents a management commitment to affirmative action for an occupation which is predominantly female and minority. Second, it will promote retention of skilled secretarial personnel within both the Agency and the occupation, thereby reducing the disruption to office production created by the constant turnover of secretarial personnel. Currently, we are losing approximately 8.5 to 9

percent of our secretaries to attrition from the Agency each year, requiring that we recruit for replacements. We are losing another 5 to 6 percent of our secretaries each year to other occupations in the Agency because of dissatisfaction with the career opportunities within the secretarial occupation, with the result that we must train two people to perform their jobs for each internal loss. The secretary leaving to take up a new occupation must develop the new skills required for that occupation, and we must recruit and train a replacement secretary. Now, we will be able to recruit directly for fully qualified people to go into our administrative occupations, and we can offer an opportunity for continued professional growth within the secretarial occupation to our secretaries wishing the opportunity for increased responsibilities.

As a result of the increased emphasis on retention of our secretaries, we hope to ease some of the pressure on our already overextended recruitment system. Because of the long lead times to recruit for replacements in any Agency occupation and the finite capacity of our recruitment system to handle applicants, we are straining to meet our requirements for operations officers and analysts we require to carry out our fundamental mission. We believe that by reducing the attrition from the secretarial occupation, we can lift some of the pressure on the recruitment system and will be able to better satisfy all our personnel needs.

Q. Has OPM been consulted and, if so, what is their view?

A. We have not consulted with OPM on this proposal. As you are aware, the Director of Central Intelligence has authority under Section 8 of the CIA Act to establish pay rates for the Agency. It has not been our practice to consult with OPM on Agency pay programs, although we do share information from time to time.

Q. Has OMB approved initiation of this experiment?

A. We have advised OMB of our Secretarial Program, and have agreed that any costs associated with the program will be absorbed out of our currently budgeted resources.

Q. Would you provide specific justification as to why you believe that this program is cost effective.

A. The projected increases in costs for the secretarial occupation associated with the new program are the direct result of a projected 50 percent reduction in attrition from the occupation. If we are not successful in reducing attrition, then our projections indicate that the costs of the new system will be approximately the same as the current system. If we are successful in achieving our retention goals with this new program, we believe the cost benefits are as follows:

a. We will reduce the pressure on our recruitment pipeline, allowing greater efficiency in obtaining the officers we require to perform operations, engineering, and analysis for the Agency.

b. Secretaries will have greater responsibilities commensurate with the potential for increased career advancement opportunities within the occupation. The levels of responsibility and pay are consistent with Agency internal position classification and equal pay for equal work principles.

c. There will be reduced disruption in the administrative management of our organization created by the constant turnover among our clerical personnel. The complexities of our recruitment and clearance process do not allow for the orderly and timely replacement of secretarial support personnel. We believe that the only practical solution to our secretarial shortage is to build a system which encourages the retention and development of the personnel that we have.

If you desire, the Director of Personnel will be happy to give you a detailed briefing on this plan.